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865c.154/1

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 865c.607/52 FOR Tel.110, noon
FROM Italy (Phillips) DATED Mar.18, 1937
TO NAME 1-1127 GPO

REGARDING:

New shore road in Libya.

Comments of Mussolini on - at the Tripoli Fair.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE ~~865d.154/27~~ 865c.20/13 FOR #624

FROM Italy (Phillips) DATED Oct.29, 1937
TO NAME 1-1127 GPO

REGARDING: Road on the Libyan coast.

Length, strategic importance, etc., of --.

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DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 865c.00/91 FOR #628

FROM Italy (Phillips) DATED Nov. 3, 1937
TO NAME 1-1127 GPO

(Enclosing report of October 8, 1937 from Mr. Jay Walker, Cairo)

REGARDING: Roads -- Libya.

Information concerning the coastal road across the colony which was completed in March 1937.

Special attention has been given by Fascist propaganda bureau to the boulevard along the sea front at Tripoli.

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Construction.

865d.154
During my fifteen months residence in Libya, it was noted that Government construction projects of many types were carried out at full speed. The coastal road across the colony, from the Tunisian frontier to the Egyptian border -- which received considerable publicity in the foreign press -- was completed and opened by Premier Mussolini in March 1937. The road is 1822 kilometers long, about 795 kilometers of which were constructed during Marshal Balbo's administration. It has been reported from good sources that the total cost of the road was about three hundred million lire, including the cost of some 65 small rest houses. However, this expenditure does not include the large contribution of work and services done by the military forces who assisted by hauling material and transporting drinking water and necessities for the thousands of laborers employed to carry out such a large military strategical project. Several long stretches of the road in Cirenaica have merely a gravel surface while the remainder is macadam. In view of the unfavorable climatic conditions and frequent sand storms which blow during most of the year, it is realized that the cost of upkeep will be high. The

French

French authorities report that similar roads in their part of North Africa must be practically rebuilt every three years. As there are very few privately owned automobiles in Libya, and a very limited number of motor tourists, it is generally agreed that the coast road will serve principally as a military highway for many years to come.

Another project which has been the subject of special attention for the Fascist propaganda bureau is a boulevard along the sea front at Tripoli for about eight blocks, known as the "Lungomare Conti Volpi". Three hotels have been built at great cost by the Government on the "Lungomare" to replace private residences, whose occupants have been forced to seek shelter in less agreeable parts of the city. A similar but smaller sea boulevard has been built at Bengasi, with a large stone archway at one end and a new government hotel at the other. A series of small government hotels have also been built at a reported cost of a million, three thousand lire each in some of the more important oases in the interior, for accomodation of parties of tourists taken there under Government supervision when climatic conditions are favorable -- during the Spring months.

In many of the small towns and native villages in the colony, the Government has built a series of buildings composed of a Fascist house, military police station, medical aid station and, in some cases, a school.

It was noted that building construction work in the cities of Tripoli and Bengasi is confined almost

entirely to Government institutions such as the "Istituto Fascista della Provvidenza Sociale", a "Casa di Balilla" and similar public buildings for use of the Fascist party activities. Several national banks and insurance companies have erected office and apartment buildings in and around Piazza Italia in Tripoli. Bank loans of government funds have financed the building of a limited number of private residences for officials on the eastern side of the city.

Central File: Decimal File 865C.154, Internal Affairs Of States, Public Works., Libya, Roads. Streets. Highways. Paving., Mar. 18, 1937 - Nov. 3, 1937. March 18 - November 3, 1937. MS European Colonialism in the Early 20th Century. National Archives (United States). Archives Unbound, link.gale.com%2Fapps%2Fdoc%2FSC5109732256%2FGDSC%3Fu%3Domni%26sid%3Dbookmark-GDSC. Accessed 18 June 2025.